

## Comment Letter AL021



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June 3, 2004

Mr. Mehdi Morshed  
Executive Director  
California High-Speed Rail Authority  
925 L Street, Suite 1425  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Morshed:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (PEIR/EIS) for the proposed California high-speed train system. SANDAG's Transportation Committee met on March 5, 2004, to review recommendations made by our Regional High-Speed Rail Task Force and has the following overall comments:

- SANDAG continues to support conventional improvements to the Coastal Corridor and high-speed train service along the Inland Corridor.
- SANDAG recommends a direct connection with downtown San Diego as part of the Inland Corridor.
- SANDAG supports a link from San Diego to Los Angeles and the Los Angeles International Airport.
- SANDAG supports continued study of Maglev as an option to steel rail technology.
- SANDAG supports a statewide approach that includes San Diego as a part of the first phase of any system or that includes funding of the San Diego section with certainty.
- The system should extend to the South Bay region of San Diego and to the U.S./Mexico International Border.
- Additional comments identified in Attachment 1.
- Attachment 2 is a transcript of the committee meeting where other questions and comments were made that may be of interest to you.

Throughout this process, your staff has been very responsive to the comments made by the San Diego region and we appreciate their efforts. We look forward to the continued working relationship between our two agencies. If you have any questions about these comments, please contact either me at (619) 699-1900 or Linda Culp of our staff at (619) 699-6957.

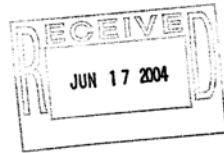
Sincerely,

*Gary L. Gallegos*  
GARY L. GALLEGOS  
Executive Director

LC/sgr

Attachments

cc: San Diego Regional High-Speed Rail Task Force



AL021

Attachment 1

#### Additional SANDAG Comments on Draft PEIR/EIS

Over the past two years, the Authority has worked closely with SANDAG and been very responsive to the region's priorities including screening undesirable alignments from further study.

Overall, the design options included in this document for the San Diego region are consistent with the region's priorities and long-range strategies for transportation and land use. There will be opportunities in the future for SANDAG and the Authority to continue to work together to refine these options.

The following comments relate to the specific design options for the Los Angeles-Orange County-San Diego Corridor:

1. The coastal rail improvements in MOBILITY 2030 most closely mirror the third option listed in Attachment 1 (the Highest Level Improvements (Short Trench/Tunnel Camino Del Mar & UTC/Grade Sep. option, page 6-91 of the report). This option totals \$1.77 billion. Major projects include tunnels under Camino Del Mar and University Town Centre (UTC), and extensive grade separations. AL021-7
2. SANDAG has developed a draft expenditure plan for the *TransNet* extension measure, an effort to extend the existing half percent sales tax that provides local transportation funds. AL021-8

The following comments relate to the specific design options for the Los Angeles-Inland Empire-San Diego Corridor:

3. In November 2001, in commenting on the Authority's initial screening recommendations, SANDAG urged the Authority to look for a connection from the I-15 corridor to downtown San Diego. Therefore, the preferred design options would be the Carroll Canyon or Miramar Road alternatives that connect along the coastal corridor to Lindbergh Field and downtown San Diego. The I-15 to Qualcomm Stadium alternative would not provide direct service to downtown San Diego. AL021-9
4. Initial travel time analysis shows a high-speed train trip between Riverside and San Diego taking less than 40 minutes. With the increase in residents moving north to San Bernardino and Riverside Counties and continuing to work in San Diego, this intercity service would be very attractive to commuters. SANDAG and the Authority should consider a future partnership to look at the details of such an intercity/commuter system in the I-15 corridor. AL021-10
5. SANDAG's MOBILITY 2030 long-range transportation plan calls for expansion of public transportation services for the Escondido Transit Center (ETC), including planned I-15 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service and the Sprinter light rail transit service. Therefore the preferred station location in Escondido would be the transit center rather than the SR 78/I-15 station alternative. The ETC alternative would add to the cost of the high-speed train system by about \$1 billion, requiring extensive tunneling. Recognizing these constraints but also the need to integrate AL021-11

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major transportation improvements, SANDAG and the Authority should continue to refine this station alignment to better connect the intercity service to local and regional services.

6. SANDAG and Caltrans also are planning a major transit center at Mira Mesa Boulevard and I-15, which also would serve as a future BRT station and provide key linkages from the I-15 corridor to a major employment area in Sorrento Mesa and University City. As is the case in Escondido, these services need to integrate with high-speed service.
7. In December 2003, SANDAG approved a revised alignment for the MidCoast light rail transit project between the Old Town Transit Center and University Towne Centre to be carried forward in the planning stage. Ensure that adequate right-of-way exists between Gilman Drive and Old Town for existing commuter/intercity rail services, future light rail service, and high-speed train service under the Carroll Canyon or Miramar Road alternatives.
8. A tunnel option under UTC is a major coastal rail improvement project included in MOBILITY 2030 and part of the Los Angeles-Orange County-San Diego HST alternative. UTC also is the terminus of the MidCoast LRT project. How will this be reconciled with an I-15 HST alignment that could potentially serve a station south of UTC, closer to the Nobel Drive Coaster Station instead of UTC?

These comments relate to the document, *Draft PEIR/EIS for the proposed California High-Speed Train System, Summary*:

9. The Purpose and Need (page S-2) states The purpose of the proposed HST system is to provide a reliable mode of travel, which links the major metropolitan areas of the state and delivers predictable and consistent travel times. Further objectives are to provide an interface with commercial airports, mass transit, and the highway network and to relieve capacity constraints of the existing transportation system as intercity travel demand in California increases, in a manner sensitive to and protective of California's unique natural resources. Consider incorporating public safety into the purpose and need for the high-speed train system, including the separation of rail from people and vehicles.
10. The Purpose and Need section further discusses the capacity issues of the current highway and airport system. Consider noting that long-term regional plans in southern California include increased capacities by 2020.
11. The last paragraph of Section S.4.3 (page S-5) states that Using the technical data from this document, Caltrans and the FRA are also preparing a separate program EIR/EIS that considers conventional (non-electric) improvements on the LOSSAN corridor, since Caltrans would be responsible for those improvements. Per SB 1703 which consolidated the transit planning and implementation functions of SANDAG, MTDB and NCTD, coastal rail corridor improvements in the San Diego region are now the responsibility of SANDAG, working cooperatively with Caltrans, Amtrak, NCTD, MTS (formerly MTDB), and other agencies.
12. The following comments relate to Table S. 6-1:
  - Under Land Use on page S-11, what is meant by Controlled growth around stations? Is this smart growth or related principles?

AL021-11  
cont.

AL021-12

AL021-13

AL021-14

AL021-15

AL021-16

AL021-17

AL021-18

- Under Noise on page S-12, the mitigation strategy for the high-speed train (HST) alternative is stated as Consider sound barriers along noise-sensitive corridors, track treatment for vibration. Consider stronger wording here in terms of coordination with local noise standards and jurisdictions' general plans.
- Under Biological Resources and Wetlands on page S-13, the mitigation strategy for HST is stated as Work with resource agencies to develop site-specific mitigation and impact avoidance strategies for project-level review. Add to this strategy the coordination and consistency with local and regional habitat conservation plans.

AL021-19

AL021-20

## Comment Letter AL021 Continued

San Diego Association of Governments

Attachment 2

**TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

April 16, 2004

AGENDA ITEM NO.: **1A**Action Requested: **APPROVE****TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS**

Meeting of March 5, 2004

The meeting of the Transportation Committee was called to order by Chair Joe Kellejian (North County Coastal) at 9:11 a.m. See the attached sheet for Transportation Committee member attendance (Attachment 1).

## 1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Action: Upon a motion by Supervisor Ron Roberts (County of San Diego) and a second by Councilmember Judy Ritter (North County Transit District [NCTD]), the Transportation Committee approved the minutes from the February 6 and February 20, 2004, meetings.

## 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Kellejian indicated that a memo was distributed in request from Mayor Pro Tem Monroe (South County) that staff review an article on traffic congestion. He noted that the Board members could read it at their convenience.

Chuck Lungerhausen, a member of the public, reminded Committee members of the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Walk/Swim event to be held at the Mission Beach Plunge tomorrow. He invited the public to attend. Mr. Lungerhausen solicited donations on behalf of MS, and noted that to date he has raised a total of \$5,010. He thanked those who have donated to this cause. On the transportation front, he said he hoped that Supervisor Dianne Jacob was informed that SANDAG is responsible for allocating the TransNet tax funds to improve transportation in the region, not just rural roads. He noted that the Board of Supervisors recently claimed that they have a \$25 million budget surplus. He wondered how this was achieved in light of the unplanned expenses of a recall election.

Supervisor Roberts responded that there was a higher level of surplus, but some of that money was used for the recall election and to fight the recent wildfires.

**REPORTS**

## 6. DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (PEIR/EIS) FOR THE PROPOSED CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED TRAIN SYSTEM (APPROVE)

Dan Leavitt, Deputy Director of the California High Speed Rail Authority, reported that they are at a stage of the project where the draft environmental document is now out for public review. The public review period will end on May 14, 2004. There will be five public hearings, one of which will be held at SANDAG on April 20, 2004, in the SANDAG Board Room.

Mr. Leavitt noted that this project will have to be implemented in phases. The next step will develop project specific work. He said that California's population and transportation demands are the reason for the State's interest in high-speed rail. He noted that the projected population growth will mostly be due to the birth rate. He commented that California has the most severely congested highways in the nation, and we are finding it more difficult to expand highways and air transportation facilities in the state.

Mr. Leavitt stated that the study compared transportation alternatives for meeting the expected travel growth: No Project (which means no additional planning), Modal Development (which includes improvements and expansion), and High-Speed Train (to build a statewide high-speed train system). He said that the proposed high-speed train system would connect the major cities and regions, would travel at speeds of up to 220 miles per hour (mph), and would be 700 miles long. The high-speed train has worked in Japan for nearly 40 years and in Europe for 25 years, and is the safest and most reliable transportation system. Mr. Leavitt reviewed the major findings for each of the three alternatives. He indicated that the high-speed train alternative is preferred because it would be an economic stimulant and a smart investment.

Mr. Leavitt said that following the public comment period, the Authority will select a preferred alignment and station locations. He stated that the preferred alignment would transverse the I-15 inland corridor in San Diego County. He reviewed several options in San Diego County such as between Mira Mesa and the March Air Force Base, Mira Mesa to Qualcomm Stadium in Mission Valley. He also described several options for connections between San Diego, Orange County, and Los Angeles, including a conventional rail connection along the coast.

SANDAG staff reported on the SANDAG High Speed Rail Task Force recommended comments as follows:

- SANDAG continues to support conventional improvements to the Coastal Corridor and high-speed train service along the Inland Corridor.
- SANDAG recommends a direct connection with downtown San Diego as part of the Inland Corridor.
- SANDAG supports a link from San Diego to Los Angeles and the Los Angeles International Airport.

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Attachment 2

- SANDAG concurs with the Authority that Maglev technology and other technology that cannot share tracks with existing rail services be dropped from further study.
- TransNet should be flexible to accommodate for emerging services such as high-speed rail.

Staff noted that there were additional comments in Attachment 3 of the agenda item.

NOTE: Attached to these minutes (Attachment 2) are the more specific Board member comments that were transmitted to the California High-Speed Rail Authority on this matter. **Action:** Upon a motion by Supervisor Roberts and a second by Councilmember Madaffer, the Transportation Committee approved the transmittal of the following six comments on the PEIR/EIS for the proposed California High-Speed Train System to the California High-Speed Rail Authority:

- SANDAG continues to support conventional improvements to the Coastal Corridor and high-speed train service along the Inland Corridor.
- SANDAG recommends a direct connection with downtown San Diego as part of the Inland Corridor.
- SANDAG supports a link from San Diego to Los Angeles and the Los Angeles International Airport.
- SANDAG supports continuing Maglev as an option.
- SANDAG supports a statewide approach that includes San Diego as a part of the first phase of any system or that includes funding of the San Diego section with certainty.
- SANDAG supports the concept of a high-speed rail system being extended into the South Bay region of San Diego.

### 7. SENIORS ACCESS TASK FORCE REPORT (APPROVE)

Staff reported that the Seniors Access Task Force found that there are many public, private, and nonprofit transportation services for seniors that exist today; but there are drawbacks to those services including restrictive trip purposes and service areas, they can be somewhat inconvenient, and they require advance reservations. These services also require high subsidies and/or high fares. To meet various needs of seniors, the Task Force established guidelines for developing transportation solutions. Staff reviewed the senior transportation needs of age eligibility at 60 years, service that is cross-jurisdictional and that provides service for any trip purpose, and is highly personalized. The program requirements included cost-effectiveness, coordination, and support from local jurisdictions. Three recommendations were also reviewed that included short-term, mid-term, and long term actions. The short-term actions include an education program for existing services and pilot transportation projects; the mid-term action would be to develop action plans for

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### DISCUSSION AT SANDAG TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING ON FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2004, RELATED TO AGENDA REPORT NO. 6

#### 6. DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (PEIR/EIS) FOR THE PROPOSED CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED TRAIN SYSTEM

##### Board Comments:

*Chair Kellejian:* I noticed on the slide and in the material that the system is considered to be at grade, but everyone knows it is grade separated and tunneled. That should be corrected.

*Mr. Dan Leavitt, Deputy Director of the California High-Speed Rail Authority:* Agreed that a clarification should be printed, because what it means is that we wouldn't change the alignment from that existing.

*Chair Kellejian:* Maybe your connotation of "at grade" is not the proper terminology.

*Mr. Leavitt:* We will clarify that. I should note that what you say to me today is informal comment for the document. It would actually help us to have that as a formal comment in writing.

*Councilmember Jim Madaffer (City of San Diego):* I have several questions here regarding Maglev and issues relative to the fourth bullet point down on the blue sheet addendum (e.g., "SANDAG concurs with the Authority that Maglev technology and other technology that cannot share tracks with existing rail services be dropped from further study."). My first question is what is actually going on in Southern California right now with respect to Maglev?

*Mr. Leavitt:* There are two proposals in Southern California, one of which is a Nevada to Anaheim proposal, which has been looked at for probably the past 20 years. That is mostly led by Nevada. The State of California's primary interest is in connecting California's major metropolitan areas. That particular effort is very complementary to what we are looking at in California with connections in two potential places, Ontario Airport and Anaheim, where the two systems would come together at multimodal stations. Actually, Anaheim is preparing a multimodal station so you could transfer from a statewide high-speed train to a Maglev train that would take you from Anaheim to Las Vegas. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is looking at a regional Maglev system that is primarily focused on moving long-distance commuters throughout the region. This is a system that again could be very complementary to a statewide system. It would connect in certain places and bring passengers in as a feeder system. Our work in California is focused for the state on intercity, longer-distanced trips. The region here has an interest in not only utilizing infrastructure for intercity trips but also the potential for long-distanced commutes. In the Bay Area, we are actually working on a partnership with SAMTRANS on the Caltrain Peninsula so that the actual infrastructure, the tracks, would be used not only by high-speed trains but also by express Caltrain services to move both intercity and commuter passengers.

*Councilmember Madaffer:* I understand the recommendation of the Task Force that the Authority has indicated that Maglev and other technology can't share the tracks. What I'm really interested in hearing is that the California High-Speed Rail Authority is in fact going to be open to all technologies. I noted very much with interest during your presentation that Japan's high-speed rail system has been proven over 40 years, and Maglev is very new. At the same time, I would like to

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make sure that anything that's going to have the expense of this magnitude, especially on a statewide basis, takes into consideration the future possibilities of using the same right-of-way. If we are going to go through the trouble of getting right-of-way and tunneling, wouldn't it make sense to have alignments available for future technology? How do you respond to that?

*Mr. Leavitt:* Actually, the State of California did look at Maglev for a number of years. The Authority began investigating Maglev from 1994 all the way until 2001. It was during that screening that the decision was made to actually eliminate Maglev and to focus on steel wheel and steel rail technology. In order to serve the population areas that we felt were necessary for a statewide system, that would not be possible with Maglev and it would not be possible with a steel wheel system that did not share tracks with other services. A key example is from San Jose to San Francisco. If you think it is important to serve downtown San Francisco and the San Francisco International Airport along the peninsula, we believe there is no other way to build that service on the Peninsula than to use the Caltrain right-of-way. There is not enough room in that right-of-way to operate in a completely separate fashion so we do need to share tracks, which can only be done with steel wheel on steel rail technology. In Southern California, for us to serve Orange County along the LOSSAN corridor we are going to have to be in a steel wheel on steel rail configuration. So, we believe it's very critical in serving markets that are important to the State of California to have a technology which is able to serve these markets as opposed to having to stop the system for example, in San Jose, and not going further.

*Councilmember Madaffer:* At the same time, I don't subscribe to the theory that technology today isn't going to necessarily work tomorrow. I think that we have to look at it much more in a macro. Perhaps 1994 to the present day is not enough time, but again ten years is really just a blip in the overall scheme of technology and transportation planning. My only comment is simple and I'd be happy to submit it myself for your adoption. I think you need to make sure that you are open for any and all emerging technologies even if they don't look like they are going to work or are possible today. Why is that yellow alignment in the Southern California area not electric? I'm looking on page 6.

*Mr. Leavitt:* I'd like to respond to your other comment first. Originally in Japan the high-speed rail system operated at about 130 miles per hour (mph). Today it is operating on those same tracks at 190 mph. We expect the next generation of the Chinkong (sp?) topping at 220 mph. The system that we are developing for California would not be obsolete. There is no reason that the next generation of the trains beyond 2020 could not operate at 250 mph or above. The systems in Europe and Japan right now are operating at 190 mph. At the same time, they have extensively been proven in revenue service. So, you have the benefit of knowing what these systems can accomplish realistically, but also the fact is that they will improve over time. The second question dealt with why the coast was eliminated. Again, this is an area that we have looked at for a number of years, and have done a number of evaluations. In this report, we did technical studies and environmental studies. The environmental work that we did showed that there would be considerable environmental impacts along the coastal communities by building a new completely double-tracked electrified system with overhead catenary. We found tremendous support for that recommendation from this part of the state.

*Supervisor Ron Roberts (County of San Diego):* I'm having trouble seeing something here. In order to have a significant impact between San Diego and Los Angeles trains are going to have to be convenient.

*Mr. Leavitt:* Absolutely. We're talking about for 2020, 60-80 trains a day operating every 10-15 minutes. One thing I want to note, we're talking about 2020, but this system would not be anywhere near capacity at 2020. You would have capacity for future generations where you could run additional trains on the track or you could lengthen the trains.

*Supervisor Roberts:* So, you've got these running really frequently, and your criteria is that we have to use the existing tracks so we can share them. How are you going to share tracks with a train that is operating at 40 mph and one that is operating at 220 mph and sharing the same tracks.

*Mr. Leavitt:* The trains travel at 200 mph through the rural parts of the state, but will be restricted in speeds in the urban areas.

*Supervisor Roberts:* We did hear you say you could get to Los Angeles from San Diego in an hour.

*Mr. Leavitt:* We're not sharing tracks with the freight trains.

*Chair Kellejian:* If I can clarify something. There are two corridors here in San Diego County that are proposed. One is the eastern corridor which will have the high speed trains with 10 to 15-minute service—is that correct?

*Mr. Leavitt:* Yes.

*Chair Kellejian:* That's the one coming down from Temecula through Escondido.

*Supervisor Roberts:* The coastal route is not really a route then. You show it on the map.

*Chair Kellejian:* That will just be an improved service from the that existing. It's not going to be the high-speed rail that was shown here today.

*Supervisor Roberts:* So, everywhere else in the state you're looking at there's track that doesn't get used by freight trains like we see it today.

*Mr. Leavitt:* Currently, the Caltrain Peninsula has mostly double track throughout, and in some sections they have three tracks. For us to be able to share track with them along that strip, it will become a four-track railroad. The two middle tracks will be used for express services, and the two outer tracks will be used for local services. We will only be traveling at speeds at about 100 mph, which is the same speed that the express services will be running at. We will not be sharing the same track with the local trains that stop at every station.

*Supervisor Roberts:* I'm looking at this line out in the Valley from Bakersfield to Fresno. Is there a line out there that doesn't carry freight?

*Mr. Leavitt:* We would be on a separate line.

*Supervisor Roberts:* So, you'll put new track in because there's no track out there today.

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*Mr. Leavitt:* We will be looking along freight rail lines, but we would not be sharing tracks with US freight any where we are going 200 mph.

*Supervisor Roberts:* The picture now that is emerging is that virtually almost throughout the state you are going to be building new lines that don't currently exist. You made it sound initially like you were going to use the tracks that are there.

*Mr. Leavitt:* The high-speed train system is only effective if you can get to the central part of the areas. We don't believe that getting to San Jose is adequate service to the Bay Area. We think that we need to get to San Francisco.

*Supervisor Roberts:* I understand that. The distance from San Jose to San Francisco is minor compared to these other enormous distances, and it's over these enormous distances that you're going to have to put new track down. Part of the reason that you're going with conventional technology seems to me to be kind of weak.

*Mr. Leavitt:* You can submit your perspective to our Authority Board. The Authority Board's perspective is that the system is not adequate to go from San Jose to Los Angeles, and that there are other populations that the high-speed rail system needs to serve, such as San Francisco and Orange County, and San Diego beyond urbanized areas. It's not adequate to have a system that just links the two major metropolitan areas without actually getting to the heart of the metropolitan areas.

*Supervisor Roberts:* How does all of this get paid for?

*Mr. Leavitt:* While the revenue from the system would offset the operations and maintenance cost and would actually create a revenue surplus for the operations, the capital cost has to be largely publicly financed.

*Supervisor Roberts:* Is that a bond issue?

*Mr. Leavitt:* Right now, the funding does not exist to build the high-speed train system. While we have been doing this environmental process, there was a \$10 billion bond measure that was passed and signed by the previous Administration to put on the ballot for November 2004. \$9 billion would be for construction of a first segment of the system between the Bay Area and Los Angeles. With the current status of the state, there are several proposals to move that bond measure to a later date. It is being discussed in the Legislature right now. The Governor in his recent budget actually proposed recalling that measure.

*Mayor Corky Smith (San Marcos):* What is the timing of this, when will it start, and how long will it take to get it finished?

*Mr. Leavitt:* The timing is contingent on getting financing. We estimate that if financing is provided the first segment could be constructed within the first 10-12 years. We expect that the whole statewide network would be in operation by 2020.

*Mayor Smith:* The first phase would be from Los Angeles to San Francisco?

*Mr. Leavitt:* That was not designated by the High-Speed Rail Authority. That was designated by the Legislature and the previous Administration in the bond measure. They put a contingency in the bond measure that the first segment would be San Francisco to Los Angeles.

*Councilmember Emery (MTS):* I'm a little disturbed with the recommendation by the SANDAG High-Speed Rail Task Force. My problem is that the allocations for transit operations in *TransNet* don't cover what we have planned in the future, let alone external and other uses. I think we have to be careful about what we add. We have great plans for construction and capital outlay but we don't have great plans for operations. How much can you put in a corridor? If we're talking about I-15 between Escondido or even Temecula and San Diego and we are putting in a multilane flex system, BRT, and so on, where are we going to fit rail?

*Chair Kellejian:* Let's let the Executive Director take on the issue of *TransNet* and what's been recommended by the High-Speed Rail Task Force. Because of prior meetings, I wasn't able to attend yesterday's meeting.

*Gary Gallegos, SANDAG Executive Director:* Councilmember Emery raises a very legitimate point. As we tried to build flexibility into *TransNet*, the discipline has been that if we're going to build a line with *TransNet* then there are operating dollars there to operate it through the life of the *TransNet* measure. So, all the new projects in the draft *TransNet* Expenditure Plan today, not only have the cost of capital but the cost for operations built in to them. Our challenge is that *TransNet* is not solving all of our needs. The pie is probably not big enough to expand it to add new services. You have to cut something out to make capacity for something else.

*Councilmember Jack Feller (Oceanside):* I've only had one experience with the Shinkong(sp?) system, but that has a through train that operates at 200 mph and then the puddle jumper that goes on the other track that diverts and stops at every stop. The one question I did have is how many actual trains will this high-speed trains system require?

*Mr. Leavitt:* The number varies between the demands we forecast. It is somewhere between 30-40 trains. The actual number is in the operating report.

*Supervisor Roberts:* I wanted to comment on the recommendation before us. I'm concerned with the fourth of the three recommendations that SANDAG concurs with the Authority. I cannot support that. I think that we should take a different position and look at Maglev. I don't have anything against conventional high-speed rail. It is proven, but I've also seen the Maglev line in operation in Shanghai. I don't want to sell this whole state short. I think we ought to be looking at a system that's going to be around for the next 100 years. I thought the reason why they were eliminating Maglev technology was that they were going to use the existing track, but what they are telling us is that virtually the whole system is going to have new track. To use that as a reason for ruling out Maglev isn't something I feel comfortable supporting. The other thing that gives me a concern is a state ballot proposition that is going to spend billions of dollars putting a train between Los Angeles and San Francisco, especially when the planning into San Diego hinges on having an end of the route at Qualcomm Stadium. This seems to be exceedingly short-sighted. Anyone who looks at that piece of property and thinks that there is going to be an opportunity because there is an empty parking lot, they are not very forward looking. For that reason, I have some concerns about the legitimacy of the planning as it relates to San Diego. Irrespective of what happens to the Chargers, I think it is safe to assume that in the probably not too distant future

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you're going to see things happening to Qualcomm and it's not going to be available for a high-speed train station unless somebody has an awful lot of money to buy it. It's not a political statement, it's a reality. It seems to me to be a major flaw in the planning and I'm wondering how sincere this planning is with respect to San Diego. I know that Los Angeles and San Francisco probably want this, but if there is a bond issue and we're not included, knowing that we have a real commitment to part of the improvements, it may never happen and you would have sold this region short again. I think that we have to express this pretty clearly. If we're going to be asked to support something, we ought to know that there is some certainty that we are going to be part of that.

*Chair Kellejian:* Mr. Leavitt, can you come back up, please. I need an explanation. You've heard Mr. Roberts' comments and it's been shared by others here. What is the reason why Maglev cannot be used specifically. I understand that in the open areas, Maglev would not be a problem at all, but it's when you get into the metropolitan areas that you have a problem with Maglev operations. Explain that in detail to us.

*Mr. Leavitt:* There is not necessarily a problem with Maglev technology coming into San Diego because it's an inland corridor. Where we've noted it's a problem is in the Bay Area. We do not feel that it's adequate service to the San Francisco Bay Area to have a transfer at San Jose to other parts of the Bay Area. You cannot use the LOSSAN corridor to bring trains to Anaheim or to Irvine other than with a steel wheeled system. Connecting to these parts of the state we believe are critical to building the high-speed train system in California. Certainly if San Diego disagrees with that, that's a comment that can be made. Along the I-15 corridor, it could be steel wheel or Maglev. It's a new corridor and there are no existing freight services along I-15. We're looking at a statewide system, not just from Los Angeles to San Diego. If San Diego is more interested in a Maglev piece from Los Angeles to San Diego, that could be a separate issue. A linked system from San Diego to San Francisco needs to be a steel wheel on a steel rail system.

*Councilmember Madaffer:* I agree with Supervisor Roberts wholeheartedly. I have real problems with bullet point No. 4. I just think that we're getting shortchanged in the San Diego region with this plan. You do require voter support on this thing and just like our *TransNet* measure, we have to make sure it has things in it that are going to make sense to folks here. I don't think that just ignoring or limiting the technology to steel wheel only is the right approach. I really would like to see that fourth bullet point reworked something along the lines that "SANDAG implores or encourages the Authority to continue planning for Maglev and other technologies, and they should be included in further studies." Let's not bury our heads in the sand because steel wheel is the great thing of today. I just want to make sure that we are planning for tomorrow in whatever we do. I'm concerned about Southern California and San Diego and the Riverside/San Diego corridor. It is meltdown on I-15 right now with people needing to live in Temecula and Murrieta and other places to find affordable housing. We know that it's only going to get worse in this region. I get troubled when I hear a state agency that ultimately will get its funding by a bond measure that the citizens of this state will have to pay for if we are not looking at all options. I have no problem with where you are headed with any of this. I just have a problem limiting our options because I believe that we ought to be looking at all things.

*Councilmember Rindone:* I want to weigh in at this point because I've discussed this before at previous SANDAG meetings when this has come forth. I think where we see the concerns expressed by Supervisor Roberts and Councilmember Madaffer are appropriate. We are a planning agency.

We are to represent San Diego County. But, more importantly, San Diego is the second largest city in the state. The fact is that the recommendation before us in bullet point four is inadequate and shortsighted. The purpose of SANDAG is as a regional planning group. In China, Maglev technology is workable and superior to steel wheel on steel rail. Basically you will be re-tracking everything whether it is two rails or four. The community I represent is Chula Vista, and it is the seventh fastest growing city in the nation. We've got two million people south of us who would utilize this system as well, and to stop short in North County or Mission Valley is woefully inadequate and irresponsible on our part in representation. It is no small chance that you have the seventh fastest growing city south of us. This report does not pay any attention to that. I would certainly support where Supervisor Roberts and Councilmember Madaffer comments. But I would want to add one final comment to those—that the high-speed rail system should connect into the South Bay. Congressman Bob Filner has worked to get a study of a corridor from the South Bay to Sacramento and to get congressional support. We need to represent the entire area of San Diego County not just North County. This system doesn't even serve North County very well. I see Maglev eventually having a Los Angeles to Las Vegas route and for us not to prepare for that option would be inadequate.

*Supervisor Roberts:* I'd like to make a motion: that we would accept the first three recommendations as they are written, and that we would rewrite the fourth bullet point to say that "SANDAG supports continuing Maglev as an option." I'd also like to add a fifth bullet point and that is, "SANDAG supports a statewide approach that includes San Diego as a part of the first phase of any system or that includes funding of the San Diego section with certainty."

*Councilmember Madaffer:* I second that, and I'll give a sixth point if you don't mind as an amendment.

*Supervisor Roberts:* That's fine.

*Councilmember Madaffer:* "that the high-speed rail should extend into the South Bay region of San Diego."

*Supervisor Roberts:* I feel comfortable with that. The problem I have is that with high-speed rail you don't put stations 12-15 miles apart.

*Councilmember Rindone:* No, but I think the wording is to consider linking all San Diego County including South County. We will not determine how that's done today. I would support the sixth bullet point made by Councilmember Madaffer.

*Mayor Terry Johnson (Oceanside):* I was just going to say I support and agree with all the comments I've heard this morning regarding this item. Just a point of clarification for the record, when I heard Councilmember Rindone speaking earlier he made reference to North County, and I wasn't quite sure if he was referring to Mission Valley or actually North County.

*Councilmember Rindone:* Mission Valley.

*Mayor Smith:* My only comment is that I have to agree with Councilmember Emery that we have to be very nervous about using *TransNet* money for operations of something that the state wants to do.

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**Comment Letter AL021 Continued**

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*Councilmember Madaffer:* Mr. Roberts included in his motion to have San Diego as a first priority in funding.

*Chair Kellejian:* We do have a motion in front of us. All those in favor of the motion, say aye. Any opposed? The motion passes.



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**Response to Comments of Gary L. Gallegos, Executive Director, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), June 17, 2004 (Letter AL021)**

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**AL021-1**

Acknowledged. The Authority supports Rail Improvements in the LOSSAN corridor in order to develop a faster, safer and more reliable passenger rail system that provides added capacity in response to increased travel demand through the year 2020 between Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties. The Authority has identified the "Inland Corridor" (I-215/I-15) via San Bernardino and Riverside counties as the preferred alignment to bring direct HST service to San Diego.

**AL021-2**

Acknowledged. The Authority has identified a direct connection with downtown San Diego as part of the HST preferred alignment and station locations. The Authority identified the Downtown San Diego Santa Fe Depot station option as the preferred station option to serve San Diego. The Downtown San Diego Santa Fe Depot is the transit "hub" station for downtown San Diego and locating the HST station here would result in the highest level of connectivity. This station option would be located in the city center where many potential HST passengers could walk to their destination and would offer good connectivity with San Diego International Airport, which is about two miles from this site. The Downtown San Diego Santa Fe Depot is also the terminus for the Coaster commuter rail service and the Amtrak Surfliner service, a major San Diego LRT station, and a bus transit hub.

**AL021-3**

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 6.39.1

**AL021-4**

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 2.10.3.

**AL021-5**

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 10.1.7.

**AL021-6**

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 2.36.1.

**AL021-7, & 8**

Acknowledged. The LOSSAN Conventional Rail Improvements have been removed from this Final Program EIR/EIS and are the subject of the Caltrans LOSSAN Rail Improvements Program EIR/EIS (Draft PEIR/EIS SCH # 2002031067). These comments have been forwarded to Caltrans for consideration. Please see standard response 6.41.1.

**AL021-9**

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 6.31.4.

**AL021-10**

Acknowledged. The Authority will consider a future partnership with SANDAG to look at the details of an intercity/commuter system in the I-15 corridor.

**AL021-11**

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 6.36.1.

**AL021-12**

Acknowledged.

**AL021-13**

Acknowledged. Project-specific study which would include preliminary engineering design would be required in order to provide such detail.

**AL021-14**

Acknowledged. The Authority has identified a potential HST station (University City) to serve northern San Diego. The ultimate location and the configuration of stations cannot be determined at this time; this would occur during the subsequent project-level environmental processes. Recommendations are made on station options to allow the Authority to pursue proposed station development in the vicinity of University City in future project specific studies. It is possible and likely that some of the preferred stations identified in the Final Program EIR/EIS will not be built. Should the HST project move forward, project level environmental review will involve continued work with SANDAG, and the City of San Diego to further define the HST alignment and potential sites for a “North City” HST station.

**AL021-15**

Acknowledged. The Authority and the FRA believe that public safety measures are a critical part of the proposed HST system; public safety is part of the purpose and need, as included in the Draft Program EIR/EIS (see page 1-4). The HST system would be completely grade separated (meaning there would be no at-grade crossings with roads, railroads, or other transportation facilities) and appropriately fenced to prevent intrusion as described in Section 2.6.4 of the Draft Program EIR/EIS.

**AL021-16**

Acknowledged. The Authority and the FRA believe that the statement, “As described in the regional transportation plans for the area that would be served by the proposed HST system, the highways and airports serving key cities are currently operating at capacity, and plans for expansion will not keep up with projected growth over the next 20 to 40 years” (Draft Program EIR/EIS, page 1-7) is accurate and recognizes that regional plans include increased capacities.

**AL021-17**

Acknowledged. This statement is in reference to the conventional intercity service from Los Angeles to San Diego (see page S-5, Draft Program EIR/EIS). It is the Authority's and FRA's understanding that Caltrans is currently responsible for improvements to this service, and is working cooperatively with the FRA and SANDAG, as well as other local agencies. Caltrans is the lead state agency for the “Los Angeles-to-San Diego Proposed Rail Corridor Improvement Study: Draft Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement” (State clearinghouse #2002031067).

**AL021-18**

Please see standard response 2.1.12. The Authority will work with local government to encourage transit-oriented development. The proposed HST system would support “smart growth.”

**AL021-19**

The Final EIR/EIS text has been revised to mention consideration of local noise policies.

**AL021-20**

The Final EIR/EIS text has been revised to reflect coordination and seeking consistency with local and regional habitat conservation plans.